

Hypnotists, Worry and Living Your Life Today

By *Harrison Barnes*

I took my wife to Las Vegas about a year ago and we decided to go see a hypnotist show. I had gone to see a hypnotist who had performed for the entire university when I was in [law school](#) and had really enjoyed it. The show was fascinating to me and really drove me to a further study and interest in the subconscious mind--something I had been studying off and on since the age of 16.

If you have not been to a hypnotist show, they are a lot of fun. At the beginning of the show the hypnotist typically stands up in front of the audience and tells some jokes. Then he proceeds to bring several volunteers on stage and starts trying to hypnotize them. When my wife and I were in Las Vegas, we were the first to volunteer to be hypnotized. This was something that we were very interested in doing--especially in front of several hundred people. After around 5 minutes the hypnotist started tapping various people and asking them to leave the stage if he believed they would not be hypnotized. I was one of these people and was sent down off the stage.

"You're not even trying," I remember the hypnotist said to a guy sitting next to me who was also sent down off the stage.

My wife was not sent off the stage. Instead, she seemed to be in full blown hypnosis. I sat down and grabbed a Diet Coke and started enjoying the entire show. I was very into the show and watching people make fun of themselves, until they sent my wife into the audience with a group of about 20 other people who were hypnotized. The hypnotist had led her to believe she was a gorilla, so she was jumping up and down in the aisle. This was too much for me. I grabbed her and started shaking her as she was going down the aisle on all fours.

"Wake the hell up! You are hypnotized!" There was so much going on that very few people saw this because they were busy laughing at the other people in the audience. It was a good thing that I stopped this. She did wake up and the hypnotist made her sit down. Right after that he had all of the people under hypnosis start telling the audience about their various sexual fantasies. It was very funny--I am just glad my wife was not there for that. I probably would have rushed on stage, punched the hypnotist, and gotten arrested.

I was so fascinated by this hypnosis demonstration that when I got home from Las Vegas I read another book or two about hypnotism, and then decided to find a local hypnotist. I found one right across the street! For a couple of months, for about an hour every Tuesday, the woman would hypnotize me. This is not typically the sort of stuff I do, however, at the time I was under a lot of stress and had been doing a lot of reading about the subconscious mind. I had never been to a hypnotist so I was very interested to see what would happen.

It was an enjoyable experience. I would go into her "office" (which was a spare bedroom) and sit down on a lawn chair, put a blanket over me and she would start talking. In the background she would always have on "spa type music" that would make me quite sleepy. Within about 10 minutes of her starting, I would fall asleep and I would wake up around an hour later. I do not remember much of what went on with the hypnotist *because I was hypnotized*. But one of the more interesting experiences was when she would make me be a caterpillar and I would be lazily climbing through the trees and so forth. This was a lot of fun until I fell asleep. Each session would last an hour. I decided that going to sleep during the middle of the day for an hour was not really productive for me and stopped seeing this hypnotist after a few months. However, more so than the hypnotism, the most beneficial thing that this hypnotist ever taught me was when I started talking to her about her profession and what she did. She told me that almost all of the people who use her are doing so because of worries that they have. They are worried about things like:

- Quitting smoking
- Losing weight
- Performing well in athletics in the future
- Overcoming various anxieties

The idea she was making clear to me was that everyone worries about things, and her role was really to help them stop worrying. If they are quitting smoking, they are worried about how they will deal with tension or social situations if they do not have cigarettes. If they are losing weight, they are worried about being hungry if they are not eating the things they like, or not being able to use food to deal with tension. Regardless of the reasons for the person going to see the hypnotist, the real reason almost all of them went was due to worry about something that they were unsure about how to deal with.

She was from Eastern Europe and I assumed had originally learned hypnosis there. I would question her about her profession, what she knew about hypnosis, and what her beliefs were about the discipline and people. She then told me a long story that I no longer remember, but which she seemed to feel very strongly about. The conclusion of the story was very simple, however, and the story ended with these words:

All things will pass, so it does us no good to worry now.

The hypnotist spoke about these words with a considerable amount of passion and believed that understanding them was the key to happiness in life. In fact, the hypnotist seemed to believe that this was all we need to know and understand about anything in order to experience true happiness.

A few months later I was speaking with a well-known author who had just taken a class called The Sedona Method. He could not stop talking about how this had changed his life and was incredibly enthusiastic about this. He sent me a bunch of information and free tapes about it. I was amazed that essentially all the Sedona Method involves is a process of asking yourself a few questions about when you are going to "let go" of various things you are worried about. All you do in the Sedona Method is identify an issue you are worried about, and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Could I let it go?
2. Would I let it go?
3. When?

That is about all there is to it. This was all this guy could talk about and he was incredibly enthusiastic about how much this had permanently changed his life. All he had done was identified a way to let go of worry. The Sedona Method is a big business and teaches thousands of people each year how to use these questions. I was amazed that something so simple could be so popular. It was like what the hypnotist taught me: the biggest problem facing most people is simply worry.

I am sure you have been around people who worry a lot--you may even be one of them. I have been in business meetings before, or interviewing people, when all of a sudden I look down at their hands and I can see that their nails are bitten to the fingers. I have interviewed people before (more than once) who have shown up to job interviews in the middle of the day drunk and smelling like liquor. What are these people so worried about? There are also people who will look at any situation and decide that something awful is going to happen in the future. I have met people who believe the world is going to end in less than a year and they are worried about it.

When I meet the person who has bitten their nails down the their ends, I have a lot of compassion for them. A worrier like this is someone who is likely very concerned about how their actions affect others. They are probably also a good person, and will have thought through their actions before they do something. The person who shows up drunk to an interview is also someone who wants to do well. They are overwhelmed by stress, and worried that in their natural stressful state they may not perform well in the interview. Both people are worriers. Being a worrier does not mean you are a bad person. In my opinion, being a worrier does not even mean you will be a bad employee. What is most wrong with being a worrier, however, is that it is not good for you.

- If you are worried about [finding a job](#), you need to stop being worried.
- If you are worried about losing your job, you need to stop being worried.
- If you are worried about the economy, you need to stop being worried.
- If you are worried about how you will look to others if you do this or that, you need to stop being worried.
- If you are worried about something wrong you did in the past, you need to stop being worried.
- If you worried about how you will be accepted by others, you need to stop being worried.
- If you are worried about what is going to happen in your job next month, you need to stop being worried.

When you meet people who are constantly worrying, you can usually see the signs very easily. Some of the signs of worry are things like:

- **Insomnia.** People who worry a lot will tell you they are having problems sleeping, and it is often because their minds are worried about this or that.
- **Incapacitation.** Many people who are worried just shut down because the stress of life is just too much for them. These people can become extremely depressed.
- **Irritation.** People who worry a lot may become very bothered by people around them and situations around them.
- **Irresponsibility.** Some worriers become irresponsible to escape the stresses they are facing. They leave jobs and relationships, and may develop different types of addictions.
- **Illness.** Many people who worry incessantly will simply get sick. Bodies cannot constantly deal with stress and many people who worry constantly will start developing all sorts of illnesses.

You may have your own signs and symptoms of worry. People worry and the signs emerge in different ways for numerous people. What ways are you worrying? Virtually every single person I know is worried about something. If you go out at lunch hour in any American city and listen to two friends sitting together at a table while having lunch, you will generally hear them talk about something they are worried about. They may be worried about their jobs. They may be worried about their health. They may be worried about one of their children. Regardless of what they are talking about, a substantial portion of most conversations will be punctuated by some sort of worry. We all worry.

Worry and anxiety can be extremely disabling for many people and serious, medical-level worry, is something that really affects some people. According to an article I recently reviewed in *Psychology Today*:

For millions of people, worry disrupts everyday life, restricting it to some degree, or even overshadowing it entirely. An estimated 15 percent of Americans suffer from one or another of the anxiety disorders. These include generalized anxiety, specific [phobias](#), obsessive-compulsive disorder and flat-out [panic attacks](#). As a group, anxiety disorders constitute the most common disorder in the country.

The fact that almost 15 percent of people are suffering from worry to the extent it has become a medical condition is an alarming statistic. This statistic does not even take into account the vast number of people who are suffering from worry to the extent it is not a disorder. We are all worried to some extent. Worry is just not something that really does us much good.

Worry is a huge trap that many people fall into. Worry often affects many of the people who are the most motivated and want to be the best in whatever they are seeking to do. People fall into the mistaken belief that worrying is something that will motivate them to do very well. However, this is simply not the case. Instead, people who are worried all the time are constantly looking towards the past and various alternatives. What ends up happening is they become distracted and not focused on the task at hand, and are lured in the trap of thinking without doing. Worry is confusion and makes it difficult to get anything whatsoever done.

One of the most interesting things you will see when you meet very successful people is that they have an incredible ability to control worry. I have seen this with the most successful Wall Street executives and leaders in virtually every field I have studied. They look at what is in front of them in the here and now, and are not as concerned about what might happen tomorrow as they are doing the best they can today. None of this is to say that the secret of success is not worrying about tomorrow--it is not. You need to prepare for tomorrow, but cannot worry about it all the of the time. Your efforts are better put into doing the best you can with what lies before you today, and this will lead you into a better tomorrow.

Most of the time, worry is not something that does us any good . It paralyzes us and makes our current moments of life much less enjoyable than they could be without worry. In addition to worry, most of us are focused on some sort of different

life in the future instead of focusing on what is in front of us today. We should enjoy each day instead of worrying about tomorrow. When we are young we say "when I am older". When we are in college we say "when I am out of college." When we are single we say "when I am married." When we are working we say "when I am retired." Soon all you have to look forward to is death.

Tomorrow will always come, but there is no use waiting to live and enjoy life until some distant point in the future. You need to live your life today. Instead of worrying about life in the future, worry about life now.

THE LESSON

An ability to control worry is a common trait of many of the most successful people. Worry, for the most part, does not do anyone any good, as it makes people constantly look to various past alternatives. Rather than worrying about the future, you must focus on life now and not wait until a distant date to live and enjoy your life.

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